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JANUARY 9, 2026 | VOLUME 17 | ISSUE 2

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Police torture Ypsilanti resident and
demolish home in 30 hour siege.
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GROUND COVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

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GROUNDCOVER NEWS

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network
of Street Papers

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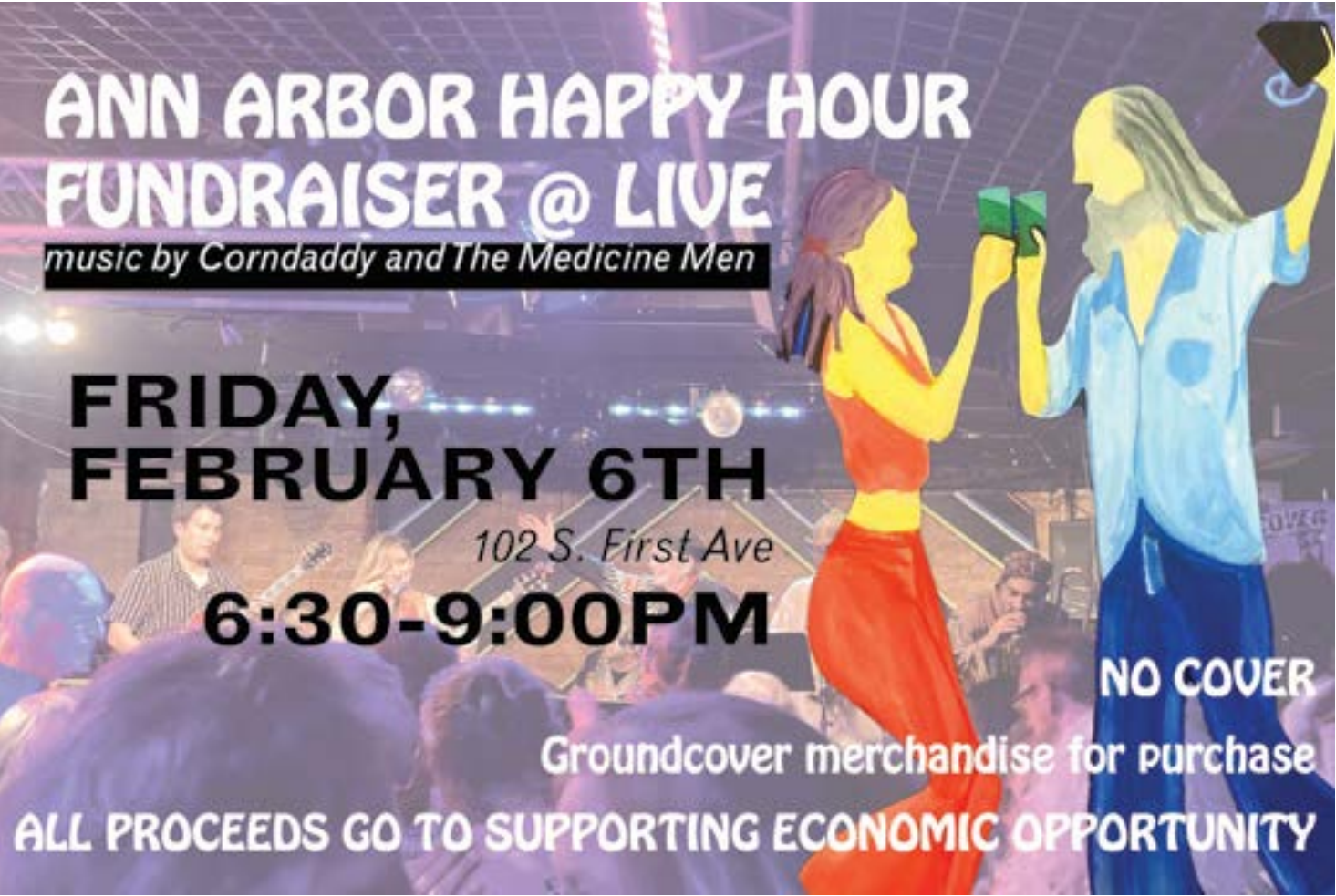
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WAYS TO SUPPORT

1. **Buy the paper, read the paper.**
2. **Get the word out** — We rely on grassroots marketing. Talk to people about Groundcover and share us with your network.
3. **Volunteer** — You'll learn a lot about our vendors, the newspaper and your community. Interested in volunteering regularly? Fill out the form on our website.
4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
5. **Follow us on Facebook and Instagram** — promote our posts and share your favorite articles and vendor interactions.
6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropriate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.



GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES				PACKAGE PRICING
Size	Black/White	Color	Dimensions (W x H in inches)	
1/8	\$110.00	\$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5	Three Months/Six Issues: 15% off
1/6	\$145.00	\$200.00	5 X 4	Six Months/Twelve Issues: 25% off
1/4	\$200.00	\$265.00	5 X 6.25	Full Year/Twenty-four Issues: 35% off
1/2	\$375.00	\$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5	Only run for two weeks/one issue: 40% off
full page	\$650.00	\$900.00	10.25 X 13	Additional 20% discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR

David Mitchell
vendor No. 661



In one sentence, who are you?
I am a proud member of the homeless community in Washtenaw County.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover? You will find me in downtown Ann Arbor, either by the Michigan Union or Fleetwood Diner.

Why did you start selling Groundcover? I came to Groundcover to publish my thoughts about life as a homeless person. I also enjoy the ability to earn income through sales.

What is one place that feels like your own personal sanctuary?
Ann Arbor downtown library.

What is your comfort food?
Pizza House pizza.

What is your life motto?
Always believe in yourself.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what would they be?
1. A radio 2. A cell phone 3. Sleeping bag

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? Austin, Texas.

If there was a theme song for your life, what would it be?
"Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor.

What is the weirdest food combo you swear by?
Meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County? The development of more homeless shelters.

What is one question you wish you were asked more?
Simply, "Would you like to meet up for coffee and conversation?"

The spark in your heart

When you notice your own suffering, remember that everyone experiences that same suffering, and extend compassion to self and other inseparably. Then the spark in your heart is active in a good way.

When 5,000 military veterans showed up at the Standing Rock indigenous nation just after Thanksgiving 2016, they looked at the 500 mercenaries and police who were protecting the construction of the Keystone pipeline on the Cannonball River. The pipeline investors changed the route to bypass Bismarck (after Bismarck's Not In My Neighborhood protests), and moved the pipeline route to Standing Rock, which was unceded territory of the Standing Rock nation.

The military veterans began to talk about taking down the police /mercenary unit near the construction site. The Grandmothers of Standing Rock quickly intervened and said to the veterans, "Listen to us, we have been in this struggle for 500 years. You need to consider what they have been through in order for them to feel okay with what they are doing."

The perpetrators of violence have been socialized into violence as the definitive norm of every supremacist society. Supremacism has a long history with roots in the experience of self and other. When reality is experienced with this dualism, which splits the



KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

whole into two parts, the other is viewed as 'not self' and becomes an object to be controlled. This cannot be done and the supremacism that arises to control reality always backfires with unintended consequences. Wars never succeed in establishing peace.

When you learn that the illusion of a separate permanent self is a fixation of ego OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), you may turn to dharma, a Sanskrit word for reality and the path to awakening.

The spark in your heart can become a warm glow that is, in fact, unconditional love, and will benefit all beings without exception. As you cultivate this awakening to your true nature it will grow until you discover you are a Buddha. You do not create anything, but now see things as they are. How simple and challenging! Dropping the need to determine an outcome can be done in one lifetime, but may take more than one.

Who can mentor you on this path? Look for those who are naturally and spontaneously compassionate. They are here

for those who sincerely aspire to discover the sacred nature of this precious human life. Karuna Buddhist Center and Triple Crane Retreat Center have a good collaboration to help bring body, speech and mind to the seamless whole that is Buddha's nature.

I believe that peace and justice will flourish when we live as awakened beings and respect our activity, and in particular, our labor. We must organize so that we produce and share with the ethic, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need" — a quote with biblical origins that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed.

Honor and grow the spark in your heart until we reach this fruition. If you want to celebrate new beginnings, consider Losar, which is the Tibetan New Year. Come to the Karuna Buddhist Center at Bethlehem United Church of Christ at 423 S. Fourth Ave. on Feb. 21. May all beings benefit.

Thieves and saints both have a place in our life. Impermanence is at play. When my tricycle was stolen I had to relearn walking and pulling a cart. The saints quickly appeared, Kori Kanayama and Lindsay Calka in particular, and a replacement tricycle is here. Winter is temporary and the days are getting longer. Thank you sun, the spark of life in our solar system!

Car repair fundraiser



LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT
Groundcover vendor No. 56

Hello everyone. I want to let you all know that I am grateful for the \$250 that four generous donors contributed. Thank you all so much.

However, I have raised some money on my own and am still in need of \$3,300 to fulfill my obligation. Once again, I am reaching out to all Groundcover News customers and donors to feel free to continue to offer a monetary contribution to my cause. This is a necessity for me and my minor child.

You may donate by my personal Venmo, CashApp or P.O. Box. I can also accept personal checks made out to me, La Shawn Courtwright.
Venmo: @LaShawn-Courtwright
CashApp: \$LaShawnCourtwright
P.O. Box: 8126 Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107
Phone: 734-686-9383.

Any donation will be gratefully received and utilized to complete my goal. Have a great day!

Is the Fare Deal, fair?

Increasing non-car transportation is a priority of the City of Ann Arbor. (Strategy 4 of A2ZERO focuses on reducing the vehicle miles we travel by at least 50%.) It has abundant positive outcomes, from helping achieve carbon neutrality to reducing traffic congestion. A group of shelter volunteers, staff and community members have identified that a key group of potential bus riders are being left behind in the bus system's recent investments and expansions: people experiencing homelessness in urban Washtenaw County.

This group is attempting to negotiate free bus fare for guests of daytime and overnight warming centers. With the stated goal of making "the bus more accessible for folks who frequent the warming centers and beyond," the group has sent email correspondence to TheRide and attended both the Ann Arbor Transit Authority's and the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority's meetings. The group's ask from them is simple: free bus rides in the winter for anyone who needs transportation in the cold.

In an email to TheRide, they articulated the situation as such:

"Between the two Daytime Warming Centers, there are roughly 150-200 people who visit on any given day. Every day we are able to allocate just 20 tokens (10 at each location) to give out, but most days we give out 20-60 tokens, relying on unpredictable donations. We buy the 20 from donated funds, and any extra is from community members who buy tokens on their own accord, or warming center staff who buy tokens from their own paychecks.

"For context, the warming centers' day to day expenses rely solely on donations. The Shelter Association pays staffing costs. This year, we have budgeted for \$5,000 in donations; this is for tokens as well as any supplies we need to buy or unforeseen expenses. If 100 people needed a token per day, this would cost \$150 per day. This is \$750 per week, \$3000 per month or \$15,000 from November through March. As it stands, even with just 20 tokens per day, over half of our operating costs go towards bus tokens. Evidently, even with popular community support for the warming centers to exist, we simply cannot afford the transportation costs.

"That we can only afford 20 tokens per day creates a daily situation in which warming center guests struggle to make it to their next location. The inconsistency is really difficult for our guests and even being able to consistently give out a baseline of 40 tokens a day instead of 20 would dramatically



LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

improve guests' ability to get out of the cold and maintain the daily functions of living. Cost aside, we also find that the AAATA is often in short supply of tokens when we are able to go and buy them; this means warming center staff and volunteers are making very frequent (multiple times a week) trips to buy tokens. When we are out of tokens, staff and volunteers may drive guests to their next location, but the need for transportation is something we are not able to meet in a sustainable way."

If TheRide cannot fulfill their request, the group requested alternative supports until TheRide can secure a longer term, fare-free program in Washtenaw: 100 free tokens per week from the AAATA, 50% off tokens if they purchase in bulk, and free rides on bus routes that the warming centers operate on.

Existing reduced fare programs are not accessible

The Ride already offers many programs that make riding the bus low-cost, depending on age, income and disability. GoldRide is a service for seniors aged 65 or older that allows them to travel for free on fixed route buses with a GoldRide I.D. card.

Most prominent in the homeless community is TheRide's Fare Deal Card program where individuals who qualify and have the corresponding AAATA I.D. can ride at half the cost. In order to obtain a card one must drop off an application and other eligibility documents at the AAATA's main office on Industrial Hwy. — not the downtown transit centers.

The four warming center guests I interviewed while writing this article are all eligible for either the Fare Deal or A-Ride program, but none have been able to acquire the AAATA I.D. needed to access the discounted fare.

For Jay, he needs a doctor to sign off paperwork verifying his disabilities. "That requires getting the paperwork together, making an appointment with a doctor and then getting to the AAATA office," he clarified.

Ray is unfamiliar with Ann Arbor

and has just stuck to the resources accessible on foot in Ypsilanti.

Still, even when people can overcome the barriers of "providing proof," half-fare (\$0.75/ride or \$3.00 day pass) is unaffordable to many people experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County. The Daytime Warming Center's practice of distributing bus fare to guests is not unique. Local agencies, nonprofits, community organizations and generous individuals are barely able to fill this transportation gap.

What other local agencies provide

MISSION's Weather Amnesty program at Purple House provides one full-fare token to each guest per day. This ensures they are able to safely leave the shelter in the morning, which is located on the east side of Ann Arbor. MISSION reported being on pace to spend \$1,500 during the 2025-26 winter season.

Groundcover News offers Go!Passes to vendors who sell 75 or more copies of each issue, as they are downtown workers — no different than those who the program was designed for.

Groundcover vendors report being able to irregularly access bus fare at the Delonis Center and Community Mental Health Annex on 4th Avenue.

The Ypsilanti District Library provides bus tokens and passes through their Library Care Coordination program. From June 2 to Dec. 9, at least 1,175 bus tokens and passes were requested by patrons and distributed. Library Social Worker Kay Layton has taken strides to overcome patrons' barriers to access reduced fare programs by training YDL librarians so more people can authorize AAATA eligibility paperwork.

What other cities do

Monroe County (Rochester, N.Y.): The RTS Code Blue program in Monroe County, New York provides transportation to warming centers for unhoused individuals during extreme cold weather, specifically when temperatures drop below 32 degrees. During "Code Blue months," individuals can request free transportation via RTS to a warming shelter in Rochester at any bus stop. If the nearest shelter is on a bus route, the bus will transport them directly there; if not, they will be taken to the RTS Transit Center, where an employee will assist them to the appropriate shelter. This program aims to ensure that no one is left out in the cold during harsh winter conditions.

"Each year, our focus is simple; no

one should be left out in the cold," said Monroe County Department of Human Services Commissioner Thalia Wright. "Since July, our DHS team has worked tirelessly with government and community partners, meeting biweekly with a dedicated planning team, including the City of Rochester, Partners Ending Homelessness, health systems, outreach programs and homeless service providers to prepare for this Code Blue season. These continued collaborations, including our partnership with RTS to offer free transportation to warming shelters, reflect the compassion and coordination of our community response." More information about this initiative here: www.monroecounty.gov/news-2025-11-19-blue

Eugene, Ore. (Lane Transit District) offers free rides when the temperature drops under 30 degrees. Free rides are available for people going to and from a warming center, only during days and times that the warming center is open.

In **Tacoma, Wash.** "Free round trips are available throughout the day and evening for passengers who tell the driver they are traveling to or from a warming center or shelter," said Rebecca Japhet, Communications Manager for Pierce Transit.

More than just a warm ride

I asked what warming center guests what they would do if they had free bus transportation around Ann Arbor and Ypsi. The responses suggest free fare would be life-saving beyond just the winter months.

Jay: "Get around to apply for jobs, and get there on time."

Fred: "Work."

D: "Seek a job."

Ray: "Get to and from my many medical appointments."

Take action

The group invites Groundcover readers to join them Tuesday, January 27, 5-7 p.m. at Detroit Street Filling Station for GetDowntown, TheRide, DDA and the City of Ann Arbor's "Conquer the Cold Challenge Midpoint Mixer" to share support for these proposals. Experiencing homelessness poses more barriers than just being low-income, aging or living with a disability. Urge decision-making parties to include people experiencing homelessness in the conversation on accessible local transportation.

community EVENTS

A2 CIVIC THEATER'S "THE HUMANS"

Jan 9–11 and 16–18, show times vary. Ann Arbor Civic Theater, 322 W. Ann Street, Ann Arbor. *A moving portrait of an American family grappling with love, loss and life in the 21st century. By Stephen Karam. Directed by Cassie Mann. Purchase tickets at a2ct.org*

FREE MOVIES AT THE MICHIGAN THEATER
Michigan Theater, 603 E Liberty Street, Ann Arbor. *Free and open to the public! Please reserve tickets in advance for an accurate attendance.*
Friday, January 9, 11 a.m. "Lilo and Stitch"
Thursday, January 22, 7 p.m. "Beyond the Infinite Two Minutes"

INDOOR WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Saturday, January 10, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Growing Hope Farmers Marketplace, 16 S. Washington St. Ypsi. *Here you'll find fresh local produce, handcrafted goods, hot food and the kind of neighborly energy that makes the cold months feel a little softer.*

DEXTER ICE FEST

Saturday, January 17, 10 a.m. Downtown Dexter, 7665 Ann Arbor St. *Ice Fest will have over 80 ice sculptures, live ice demos, a downtown coco crawl and more!*

ARAB EXPRESSIONS

Saturday, January 17, 7 p.m. Michigan Theater *An Arab cultural show to showcase the Arab community on campus and represent their heritage and culture. Purchase tickets at marquee-arts.org/*

AROUND THE KITCHEN TABLE PEACE HOUSE BRUNCH

Sunday, January 18, 11 a.m. -1 p.m. Growing Hope Farmers Marketplace, 16 S. Washington St. Ypsilanti. *Monthly free brunch and community-building event. Free to everyone — omni, vegan and gluten-free options always available. A free clothing swap will follow in the same location.*

ANN ARBOR RESTAURANT WEEK

Sunday, January 18 - Friday, January 23. Downtown Ann Arbor participating restaurants. *An annual event that celebrates the city's vibrant culinary scene by offering diners the opportunity to enjoy special menus and deals at downtown restaurants. During this event, participating restaurants provide fixed-price menus, allowing patrons to experience a variety of dishes at a set price. See menus at www.annarborrestaurantweek.com/*

UNBOWED AND UNBROKEN: THE ENDURING STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE
Monday, January 19, 10 a.m.

-11:30 a.m. Hill Auditorium, 825 N University Ave. Ann Arbor *40th Annual Keynote Memorial Lecture of the University of Michigan's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium, featuring Donzaleigh Abernathy and Derrick Johnson.*

MLK AND MILITARISM TODAY

Monday, January 19, 6-7:30 p.m. AADL downtown, 4th Floor Program Room. *Martin Luther King Jr. found militarism to be one of the three fundamental evils to equality in American Culture. How he defined this issue in the sixties to some extent remains the same, but things regarding his viewpoint have changed over the past 60+ years. Presented by Veterans For Peace local Chapter 93, this program will examine MLK's original view and inquire into how the implications of militarism appear today.*

ANN ARBOR HAPPY HOUR GROUND COVER FUNDRAISER

Friday, February 6, 6:30-9 p.m. LIVE Nightclub, 102 S. First Street, Ann Arbor. *Close out Vendor Appreciation Week with the Groundcover crew! Live music by Corndaddy and The Medicine Men. Groundcover merchandise for sale. Free.*

Submit an event to be featured in the next edition:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Groundcover Vendor Code

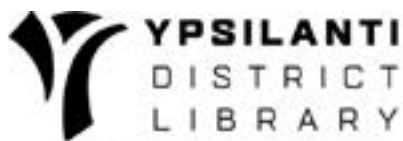
While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.

- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.

- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty



GET TO KNOW YDL!

WHERE TO FIND US:
Online at ypsilibrary.org
Call us at 734-482-4110.

TO GET YOUR LIBRARY CARD:

- 1) Fill out the easy online form at ypsilibrary.org/library-cards.
- 2) Call 734-482-4110
- 3) Or stop by any YDL location!

DON'T HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE? We can work with a variety of IDs to get you your card.

MLK Day Service Project

Mon | Jan 19 | 2-4pm |
YDL-Michigan

Join us for a service project making greeting cards for Meals on Wheels. You can also donate trial-size hygiene products to go to the Warming Center and Hope Clinic.

FEATURED EVENT

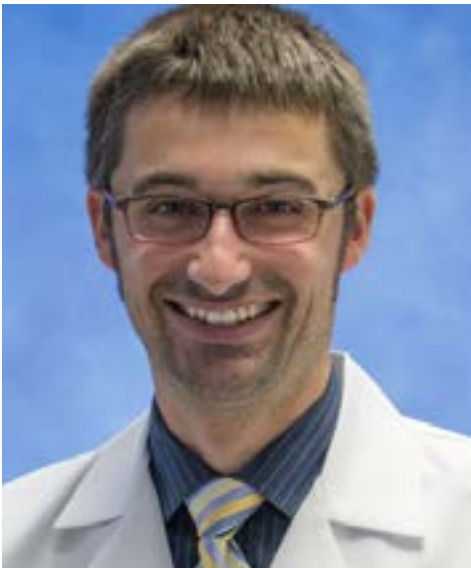
FRIENDS OF YDL BOOK SALE

Mon-Thurs | Jan 15-18
Jan. 15: 6-8pm (members-only)
Jan. 16: 11am-5pm
Jan. 17: 11am-3pm
Jan. 18: 1-3pm | YDL-Whittaker

Book sale prices are \$1 for hardcovers, 25¢ for kids books, 50¢ for mass market paperbacks, and \$1 for oversize paperbacks. On January 18 there will be bags of books available for \$5, and some books will be sold for a reduced price. Memberships will be available for purchase at the door

while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code or leave positive review of a Vendor experience please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.



Left to right: **Dr. Graham Smith**, Clinical Assistant Professor in the U-M Department of Emergency Medicine. **Jimena Loveluck**, Health Officer at Washtenaw County Health Department. **Kristen Schweighoefer**, Environmental Health Director at Washtenaw Health Department. **Dr. Juan Marquez**, Medical Director, Washtenaw and Livingston County Health Departments.

Connection of Washtenaw Health Department to Healthy People 2000 Initiatives (part two)

In the last edition of Groundcover, I wrote an article about the Healthy Peoples Initiatives, which started as a policy of the Department of Health and Human Services in 1990 (Healthy People 2000) and were renewed every ten years. I want to establish some of the background of these policies.

Healthcare policy debates

During the early 1970s, President Richard Nixon issued several proposals for a National Healthcare solution in order to reduce the cost of healthcare and expand universal access. Those policy debates led to the 1973 Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Act of 1973. That particular legislation sparked a lot of debates. There were people in the government and businesses who claimed that the 1973 act seemed to resemble the British National Health Service, which was not very popular among conservatives.

In the 1980s, the health policy debates continued with the focus on cost, universal access, elderly healthcare and healthcare for poor children. With the election of President Bill Clinton in 1992, the health policy debates started again with more momentum. Hillary Clinton was asked to be the leader of the Clinton administration's push for a universal healthcare act. The health policy debates of the 1990s were very acrimonious. However, during the end of President Clinton's presidency, Congress passed three bills which propelled the Healthy People's Initiatives designed and implemented by the office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Key Healthy People 2000 legislation included the Children's Health Act of



WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

2000; the Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000; and the Public Health Improvement Act of 2000. These helped to fulfill the administrative goals of the Healthy People Initiatives.

Washtenaw County Health Department responses

To move these policies forward, the Washtenaw County Health Department initiated partnerships with University of Michigan, Livingston County, Trinity Health, and Chelsea Hospitals. A new partnership started in 2025 between the University of Michigan School of Public Health and the Washtenaw County Health Department; it is intended to help develop a professional practice for the students to work with staff members and also with the members of the Washtenaw County community. Students from the School of Public Health get their practical community health experience by working on the Washtenaw County Health Department's priorities in the community.

The health department's priorities are based on their annual reports,

which they prepare for the County government.

Black children are six times more likely — and Hispanic children nearly three times more likely — to grow up in poverty than their white peers, according to the Washtenaw County press release of 2018 authorized by Susan Cerniglia, Health Department Communication Manager. The press release continued, "The Washtenaw County opportunity index shows that there is a nine-year difference in life expectancy between Ann Arbor's 48104 zip code and Ypsilanti's 48198 zip code." The bad news about the County's health in 2018 continued with the following recommendations made:

"In order to end these health inequities, we must focus on more than just individual health care and behaviors. One in seven Washtenaw County residents are food-insecure, according to the rankings. The County was ranked at the bottom for air pollution and violent crimes; these are issues that must be fixed systematically."

During the COVID-19 epidemic, many Washtenaw County families and individuals faced serious mental health issues. After the pandemic, it was noted that the County continued to have greater mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression and social isolation. The County's key mental health issues, which WCHD is continuing to address, include: anxiety and depression, youth mental health, suicide and service gaps.

The key Community Mental Health initiatives include: #WishYouKnew Campaign, whereby CMH promotes dialog and connects families to resources; parent workshops; school-based programs providing support for

anti-stigma and peer support events; and jail programming where the Justice Project Outreach Team provides mental health services and substance abuse support.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has been following all the health policies debates since the 1990s with healthcare assessments. In 2023, they added a focus on eliminating disparities in healthcare access and improvements in food security, including emphasis on providing housing for the homeless, to their ongoing focus on mental healthcare.

Just like the Healthy People Initiatives, the WCHD has moved to emphasizing social determinants of health. One of these is the number of people who died from gun violence. Graduates of the University of Michigan Medical Sociology program, such as Dr. David Williams of Harvard University's School of Public Health and Dr. Thomas LaVesit, Dean of Tulane University School of Public Health, have been national leaders in this area.

On Oct.29, 2025, mlive.com published an online article titled "Where are the healthiest places to live in Michigan?" which noted, "Life is generally healthiest in Northwest Michigan and outside Detroit in Livingston, Washtenaw and Oakland Counties according to a new data-heavy analysis by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation."

The 2023 rankings showed that Washtenaw County ranked among the top tier for "factors like health outcomes and social determinants of health." (The most recent is the 2024 report.) The County continued to be challenged by the issues of health

healthcare RESOURCE CORNER

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734-926-4900

Packard Health Ypsilanti
200 Arnet St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198 / 734-985-7200

Hope Clinic
518 Harriet St. , Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Saturday 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. New patients, call 734-481-0111

Free primary care, even if you are uninsured or under-insured. We will work with you to get access to public insurance, if you are eligible. Appointment times available: Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Wednesday 12:30-4 p.m.

Family Life Services
840 Maus Ave., Ypsilanti MI 48198 / 734-434-3088
Monday, Wednesday-Friday: 12:30-4 p.m., Tuesday 3:30-7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday: Closed
—Pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, abortion/adoption information, prenatal vitamins
—Community service referrals
—Educational programs
—Infant/maternity clothing, diapers, wipes and formula (when available)
—For families, expecting mothers, mothers/fathers with children aged 0-4

Corner Health Center (ages 12-25 only)
47 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti, MI 48197 / 734-484-3600
APPOINTMENT ONLY
Monday, Thursday, Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Wednesday 1-5 p.m.
Provides health care, including physicals, immunizations, TB testing, short/long-term health problem coverage; sexual health care: birth control options, STI testing and treatment, HIV testing and counseling, pregnancy tests and mental health services. There is a pantry store (clients earn points for coming to their appointments that they can spend there), including items like food, hygiene, books, clothes, baby supplies, etc. Corner Health

Center accepts some private insurance and uses a sliding scale fee for those without insurance; they will assist with applying for Medicaid. Young individuals can receive food from the pantry once per day.

DENTAL CARE
Community Dental Center
406 N. Ashley, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 / 734-998-9640
Full service dental office provides services to children and adults who live in Washtenaw County.
www.dent.umich.edu/cdc/

Hope Dental Clinic
518 Harriet St., Ypsilanti MI 48198 / 734-480-9575
www.thehopeclinic.org/dentalclinic
Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Must be uninsured, have an income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Proof of income, photo ID and your COVID-19 vaccination card will be required prior to scheduling an appointment. Unfortunately, we are unable to see you in the dental clinic if you have any form of dental insurance.

University of Michigan School of Dentistry
1011 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109
734-763-6933
Dental work done by students who are closely supervised by faculty members.
www.dent.umich.edu/patients

WINTER PROGRAM INFORMATION DAY TIME WARMING SHELTER LOCATIONS:

Location	Address	Dates Available
Ypsilanti Freighthouse (Mon.- Thur., 8am-6pm)	100 Market Place Ypsilanti	Nov. 10, 2025 - March 31, 2026
Delonis Center (Weekends only)	312 W. Huron St. Ann Arbor	Nov. 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026
Lord of Light Lutheran Church	801 S. Forest Ave. Ann Arbor	Dec. 22, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026 EXCEPT DECEMBER 25TH
Ann Arbor Friend's Meeting	1420 Hill St. Ann Arbor	December 25, 2025
St. Mary's Student Parish	331 Thompson St. Ann Arbor	Jan. 5, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2026
First Congregational Church	608 E. Williams St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 2, 2026 - Feb. 13, 2026
First Baptist Church	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 16, 2026 - March 27, 2026

All Washtenaw County office building lobbies are available as warming center sites during normal business hours.

Unless otherwise specified, all above warming shelters operate Monday through Friday during normal business hours. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Delonis Center at 734-662-2829. For updates, visit bit.ly/washtenaw-warming.



OVERNIGHT SHELTER INFORMATION

Winter shelter information: Winter daytime and overnight shelter accommodations are available throughout the winter shelter season from **November 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026** for any individual seeking emergency shelter during the cold winter months.

- **Daytime shelter** - Monday - Thursday, 8am - 6pm at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (100 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
- **Overnight shelter** - Nighttime accommodations are at the Delonis Center, 312 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor, and at offsite locations including Congregation partners throughout the County, and there is an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti. During day-time hours, those seeking overnight shelter should first contact HAWC to obtain a referral for shelter at 734-961-1999.

How do I get into the shelter?
Any individuals or families seeking emergency shelter please contact Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) at 734-961-1999 to obtain a referral to the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (individuals), Alpha House (families), & SafeHouse (survivors). If it is after 5pm or weekend, if you're an individual, please come to or call the Delonis Center (734-662- 2829) and we'll assist serving you. Families, please come to or call Alpha House for assistance anytime at 734-822-0220.

What is provided at the shelter?
Individuals are provided a safe place to sleep each night and can access a wide variety of services including meals, case management, medical care, and most importantly help finding permanent housing.



For updates and more information:
bit.ly/washtenaw-warming

Police torture Ypsilanti resident and demolish home in 30 hour siege

GREG WOODRING
Groundcover contributor

The combined forces of Ypsilanti Police, Eastern Michigan University Police, Ann Arbor Police, Washtenaw County Police, Livingston County Police, Plymouth Police, Howell Police, Hamburg Township Police, Shiawassee County Police, State Police and Washtenaw County SWAT laid siege against an Ypsilanti man experiencing a mental health crisis armed only with a sword. Over the course of 30 hours spanning Sunday, January 4 and Monday, January 5, police used tear gas, flashbangs, an LRAD (a sonic weapon meant to disperse crowds through extremely loud and disorienting sounds), a fire hose, and demolition equipment to try to force the man from his home.

The confrontation began on January 4 at 12:30 p.m. following a wellness check called by the downstairs neighbor. The neighbor had complained of harassment including banging on doors, floors, shouting and loud music. When police arrived the man allegedly answered the door with a sword and police made the decision to retreat and create a perimeter surrounding the building.

At roughly 4 p.m. Washtenaw County SWAT arrived. They proceeded to break both upstairs windows, cut

electricity and gas to the house, and begin launching tear gas grenades and flashbangs into the residence.

The confrontation lasted through the night and into the next day. Police presence continued to grow. A mobile command unit, armored vehicle, several police cruisers, fire trucks, ambulances and a crane were deployed to the scene. Snipers also occupied the church across the street, displacing Meals of Wheels services.

Neighbors and community members had gathered in protest throughout the day. Around 3 p.m. Monday police confronted them, tackling several and arresting two.

At approximately 5 p.m. the Washtenaw County Sheriff Alyshia Dyer arrived and answered questions from concerned residents. The sheriff maintained that the police were attempting to de-escalate the situation, but could not answer why that level of police presence was required for one man alone with a sword.

At approximately 6 p.m. police, while elevated behind a specialized shield attached to a crane, began using a fire hose to spray the inside of the building. The police continued to intermittently use the hose to spray the building for several hours.

At approximately 8:30 p.m. the police began to demolish the front and inside of the building using a crane. The

police then proceeded to spray the fire hose into the building through the hole that was opened up. On the loud speaker negotiators played music and demanded that he exit the building, claiming they would continue until the building was totally exposed.

Finally at approximately 11 p.m. following two flash bangs, three tear gas grenades and the sound of what seemed to be gunshots police entered the building and pulled the man out in what seemed to be some dark tarp. The confrontation ended with police apprehending a man who had withstood nearly 36 hours of constant tear gas, flash bangs, sonic weapons and freezing cold temperatures exacerbated by thousands of gallons of water unloaded into his home by a fire hose and demolition equipment tearing the walls out of his apartment. Sheriff Dyer has reported that the man is now alive and in custody.

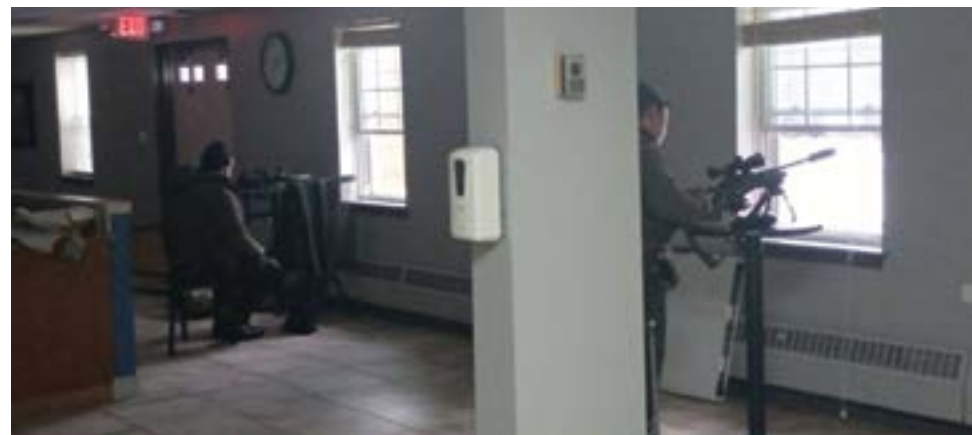
On Jan. 7 YDP submitted eight felony charges against the resident in crisis.

The City of Ypsilanti published a statement Jan. 7 via Facebook. "Per protocol, YPD requested aid from the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office Crisis Response Team who then arrived on scene, and were unfortunately unsuccessful in reaching the individual. Following the unsuccessful attempts, on directive of the Crisis Response Team Metro SWAT was contacted for assistance by YPD per protocol, due to their specialized training and resources. Upon the arrival of

Metro SWAT, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office assumed full control of the scene ..." WCSO has not released a statement as of the time of printing.

Regardless of how the decisions were made, it's abundantly clear that excessive and unnecessary force were used against a single man who was posing no immediate threat to anyone. For roughly 36 hours, three residential blocks were blockaded, residents were displaced from homes, and neighbors were subjected to tear gas, the sounds of flash bangs and sound weapons, and extreme militarized police presence. The three-unit apartment building is completely unlivable, displacing the downstairs resident who originally called in the police for help.

Several questions remain to be answered surrounding the event. Residents have speculated that police used this crisis as an opportunity to train on the militarized equipment they rarely get to use. Many of them claim that this is the reason for so many far flung police departments to be involved in this mental health crisis turned domestic military action. Local, county and state police certainly haven't given any reason that seems satisfactory to justify this level of force. If this is the case, one does have to wonder if the police having this equipment is actually making anyone safer, or if instead it's simply tempting the officers to escalate situations that could have otherwise been handled without violence.



Above: Snipers staged inside First Baptist Church, across from resident's home. Below: SWAT fires tear gas and flash bangs into the house alongside armored vehicle.



Above: Crowd surrounds police as they arrest concerned, protesting neighbor. Below: After the removal of the resident through siege, the house is unlivable.



CONQUER • THE • COLD

Join the winter sustainable transportation challenge!

The Conquer the Cold challenge runs January 12 through February 12, 2026!

Join the challenge to earn rewards, stay social, and show the impact of using sustainable transportation options for your local travel.

Special rewards for first time participants and more than 25 chances to win gift cards to local businesses.

Learn more at win.getDowntown.org.



get Downtown

TheRide



Through education, outreach, and different challenges, Conquer the Cold aims to help commuters choose sustainable transportation in colder weather.

Sword vs. SWAT

WHAT'S LEFT YPSI

It's 3 p.m. on a winter afternoon — Jan. 5, 2026. The Ypsilanti sky shines behind rolling clouds and a battalion occupies the streets a few blocks away.

Walking through Normal Park on Wallace toward Cross: police tape, flashing lights, a giant surveillance tower and 50 police cars — Eastern Michigan University Police Department, Livingston County Sheriff, Ypsilanti PD, Shiawassee County Sheriff, Plymouth PD, Howell PD, Michigan State Police, Livingston County SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics), Washtenaw County Sheriff, Washtenaw County SWAT, and a gigantic vehicle the size of a mobile home which features six cameras and a TV tuned to one block away. A neighbor is walking their dog diagonally through the gross display. Smiling soldiers toy with their shiny devices, and tall bureaucrats linger in long coats and big frowns. Three men with machine guns walk past you. Barricade. Smells of sulfur and gasoline. What can you do? There are no answers here.

Around the corner is a small tank — "Armored Critical Incident Vehicle." There is a crane. There is a "hydraulic breaching ram." There is at least one firetruck with a gigantic hose attachment strong enough to peel drywall. There are men with "riot control" weapons at their fingertips who haven't slept all night. There are two residents being tackled and detained by some of these men. And there is one person with a katana sword whose domicile is being torn apart piece by piece who is having a very, very bad day.

In a 32-hour event ending late the evening of Jan. 5, a phonebook of police jurisdictions took part in a violent and humiliating removal of an Ypsilanti man from his upstairs living space in a house on W. Cross St. After multiple wellness checks by police and mental health professionals in the week leading up to this event, police were called to the scene of a man banging on a neighbor's door with an object. When they arrived, the man was back in his apartment. He is accused of charging the police with a sword after they knocked on his door.

Throughout the night of Jan. 4 and into the next day, SWAT and police used dozens of teargas bombs, flash-bangs, an LRAD (Long Range Acoustic Device) noise weapon, a hydraulic battering ram attached to a crane, and a firehose to try and remove the man from his residence, creating a vivid scene of psychological brutality against one person—and the whole blockaded neighborhood, the whole

city, the whole county paid for it.

Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels was forced to halt programming that day; the church they work out of housed snipers instead. 250 families didn't get meals that day. Normal Park residents were stopped from returning home, some blocked from returning home, others prevented from using their cars and accessing clean and quiet air. All while forced to bear witness to a public annihilation of their neighbor—the county residents got to see what their money funds.

Washtenaw County, our incredible home: willing and capable of great destruction. How did this happen? Why do we have this arsenal of weaponry and mercenaries but no homeless shelter in Ypsi open year round? Next to no park bathrooms, public transit, or recreation centers? How did we get here, how did our neighbor get here, and how did banging on the downstairs ceiling transform into this fantastic spectacle of brutality? What would have happened if skilled unarmed de-escalation professionals had worked on this until they had a solution?

Questions abound. Of course, the common person is not supported at all in this country. What happened earlier this week is a caricature of what has happened and will happen to many of us: state-sanctioned removal when we finally break. Because as it turns out, this all started with an inability to pay rent.

Local pastor, director of FedUp Ministries, and community organizer Anna Taylor-McCants has familiarity with these events and people closest to the situation, and What's Left asked her to help us understand what had happened:

What's Left: Thanks for talking with us, Anna. What do you know about the lead up to this incident?

Rev. Anna Taylor-McCants: It seems like the tenant was down on his luck which took a toll on his mental health, dating back to the summer. The people who knew him seemed really sad about his declining mental health, and they wanted to be sure he was safe when he stopped returning text messages. He was facing eviction, and after he missed his court date someone close to him called for a mental health check.

WL: What do you know about the incident itself?

ATM: I know what I saw from observing on-scene for multiple hours. The excessive reaction to this man's mental health crisis resulted in trauma for so many people. Military gear on civilian streets, expanding barricades, a stand-off for 30 hours — it was all too much.



Above: **Crisis negotiator wears uniform hat with sword emblem.**
Below: **Normal Park neighbors mobilize to Washtenaw Board of Commissioners Jan. 7 meeting to speak out.** Photos by Emily Mills.



I am so so grateful that our neighbor did not lose his life. But he deserved better and so did our community.

WL: How do you think things could have gone differently?

ATM: Oof, this is a hard question to answer. Certain things should have never occurred on the scene, period. The use of military equipment and people with guns on people who are in a mental health crisis is horrific and should not happen.

Things could also have gone differently if the gentlemen in crisis had received mental health services for the months leading up to the incident. He was on a decline; he had people who cared. My only thought is that resources weren't as available/accessible as we'd like to think they are.

WL: What do you want to see come out of this?

ATM: I'd like to see our leaders — all elected officials across municipalities and agencies — begin to work together instead of placing blame on each other. Coming together to truly address needs like mental health, eviction, housing, homelessness, and more is one of the ways we will grow stronger together.

WL: Have you ever witnessed a militarized response to a mental health issue on this level?

ATM: I was in seminary when clergy were called to bear witness in Charlottesville. I drove for hours during my summer Greek class to hold vigil with those present. Other than that, never.

WL: What is one thing neighbors can do to practice community care in the wake of this incident?

ATM: To care for ourselves: Have a list of resources ready if and when you ever need it. The list may be for a close friend, but we're all only a couple of steps away from needing help ourselves. Know who to call when you need extra support, and practice reaching out before things get hard.

To care for each other — continue checking in on those you love. Ask hard questions. Notice when your people are struggling and don't be afraid to take off your shoes and sit in the pew alongside them. Sometimes all we need is a witness (and sometimes we need more). One thing I know: isolation kills.

WL: Anything else that's been on your mind regarding this?

ATM: I believe our Community Mental Health office needs to review its database of calls. In my experience as a pastor, every time I've called CMH in Ypsilanti the police show up alongside the CMH workers. When I pastored in Ann Arbor, the police never showed up for a single call I made to CMH. Do our helping agencies view people in crisis in Ypsilanti as more dangerous than Ann Arbor? We need to take a hard look at patterns in our community mental health services and learn where we are failing and need to do things differently.

**WHAT'S LEFT
YPSILANTI**

Published in partnership with What's Left Ypsilanti.

On the road with the LogInBus: combating social exclusion in Germany

ADRIANE DIETRICH Trott-War

On Sept. 14, 2025, as the fourth edition of the StreetCamp festival brings together many people affected by poverty on Stuttgart's Leonhardsplatz to mark World Homelessness Day, the LogInBus is in exactly the right place. Some guests still ask, a little shyly, what the "Baby Bus" actually is. But a glance inside quickly reveals the answer: the van's seats have been replaced by four mobile PC workstations.

In principle, it is a small internet café on wheels, but one that focuses on people who have little or no conventional access to the internet and digital technology for either financial or age-related reasons. For example, there is a man present who wants to switch from his old mobile phone to a smartphone and needs assistance to do so. In principle, anyone can use the service; the only condition is that they comply with the conditions of use. These set out how to use the equipment, but also how to interact with other users in the real and digital world.

Project employee Oliver Ludwig is on hand to teach digital skills. He is also responsible for converting the van: the four laptops are each mounted on a small, customised table on wheels. Everything is designed so that nothing can slip while the bus is on the move. Of course, a power supply is needed for the PCs and also for the printer, and Ludwig has integrated charging stations for smartphones. Anyone wishing to take documents away with them is given a free USB stick.

Ludwig cares deeply about the project and the people involved. On hot days, he provides bottles of water and muesli bars, kept in a small stash for emergencies. "In summer, our bus actually provides protection from the heat," he says, smiling. If users need additional provisions, such as clothing, he refers them to relevant drop-in centres.

The LogInBus team also consists of two other employees: Jana Tepper, project manager, and Hannah Gröner, project manager at the Street University, with which the LogInBus is affiliated. With its inclusive educational programme, open to all, the Street University sees itself as a bridge builder and knowledge mediator between people living in precarious circumstances and interested members of the public.

The LogInBus not only acts as a mobile internet hotspot on certain

days and at certain locations; the team also offers internet and digital technology events and courses through the Street University. There they teach the basics: How do I use the internet? How do I protect my data online? The aim is not only to provide immediate assistance, but also to make people more digitally literate and, where possible, more independent.

However, the main focus is on the basic idea behind the bus: to offer a mobile outreach service, because it is often not possible for people living in poverty or disabled people to get to fixed locations if they cannot afford the fare or are unable to travel to a remote site. For this reason, the current LogInBus stops have been chosen deliberately so that they are easily accessible to the target group: central and public meeting points such as the St. Paul's church in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, where there is also a food sharing point from which a hot meal is provided every Monday.

The bus also makes regular stops at St Mary's Church in Stuttgart. Harry's Bude and other services for marginalised people, not far from the Paulinen bridge, reach people experiencing homelessness and addiction. The 21 Brückenstraße stop in Stuttgart-Bad-Cannstatt is home to a Caritas community psychiatric centre, the Femmetastisch day centre looks after women dealing with difficult life situations, and the Ostheim residential café is a multi-generational project.

The project idea for a low-threshold digital participation programme came about as a result of increased enquiries from Street University clients: "During the project's development, we worked closely with visitors to the Street University and the Vesper Church to find out what issues they are concerned with in the digital world," Tepper said.

The skill gaps that they help to address include internet research, writing emails and printing out a document. Staff also visited other institutions and drop-in centres to get the target group on board in advance and analyse their needs. They were also involved in the naming process.

The project will supplement existing facilities, such as the Evangelical Society's "Eva's media room," with whom the LogInBus team collaborates on a regular basis.

As the overarching and long-term goal is to train and educate more people in digital skills, Neue Arbeit is dependent on volunteer support. There are also plans to offer one-to-one learning tandems and possibly to



Oliver Ludwig in front of the LogInBus.
Photo by Adriane Dietrich

expand the weekly programme. Volunteers do not need to be IT experts to impart basic knowledge and answer visitors' most pressing questions; basic familiarity with digital technology is enough.

The growing success of the LogInBus may also secure further funding for the project beyond January 2027, when the current funding from the Vector Foundation comes to an end.

*Translated from German via Translators Without Borders
Courtesy of Trott-war / INSP.ngo*



Did you know Washtenaw Literacy offers digital literacy tutoring every other week at the Groundcover News office?

Sessions occur Mondays 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., the next two sessions are on January 12 and January 26.

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here
 423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 734-665-6149
 Bethlehem-ucc.org facebook.com/bethlehemucca2
Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office

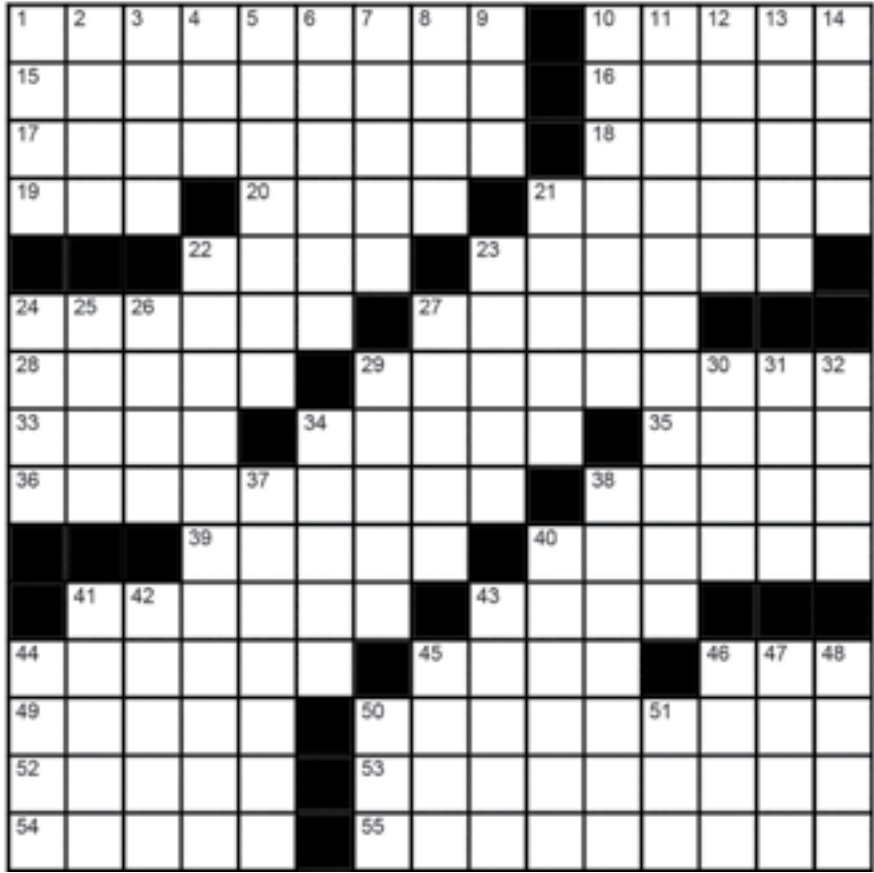
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST JUST

JANUARY 2026 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM
 Please visit the church website at:
 www.bethlehem-ucc.org for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.

Sunday Worship Time
 10:00 am In-person
 and via Live Stream

CROSSWORD

International Network of Street Papers



ACROSS

1. Harder to understand
10. Tall fur hat
15. Greek school of wrestling
16. Bone cavities
17. Shield bearing a coat of arms (Var.)
18. River of Deutschland
19. Barely get by, with "out"
20. Earl Grey and others
21. Changing color
22. Microsoft product
23. The study of plants
24. Places to say "I do"
27. Barbaric
28. Aussie smoker's request
29. Loan for a start-up
33. Bit
34. Key ingredient of many smoothies
35. How one finds Easter eggs
36. Brand of Irish whiskey
38. Eyelashes
39. Primitive locking mechanism, as for a gate
40. African grasslands
41. Shoe for a tiny foot
43. "___ Poppins"
44. Educational programming language
45. Scottish clothing chest
46. Battering device
49. Pathetic one (Brit.)
50. Inhumane caning of feet as punishment
52. Clean one's feathers
53. [Intentionally left blank]
54. Mails
55. Plot

DOWN

1. Church area
2. Endorse
3. Pivot
4. Sylvester, to Tweety
5. Parsonage
6. They direct you to your seat
7. Lieu
8. Greek god of love
9. Bled, as colors
10. Minerals used in paint (Var.)
11. In a harmful way
12. Draft holder
13. Salty, as seawater
14. Yin counterpart
21. Question the truth of
22. Passionate
23. Spread widely, as a rumor
24. Jewish month
25. Old stringed instrument
26. Put one's foot down?
27. Romantic infatuation
29. Dinner prayer
30. "___ Lang Syne"
31. Do needlework
32. Flight data, briefly
34. Malodorous
37. Provisions
38. Notarized
40. More immense
41. Trumpet
42. Humorist Nash
43. Botch
44. Dangerous biters
45. German philosopher known for the Categorical Imperative
46. Indian princess
47. Gulf of ___, off the coast of Yemen
48. Mean, medium, and ___
50. Greyhound, e.g.
51. Zilch

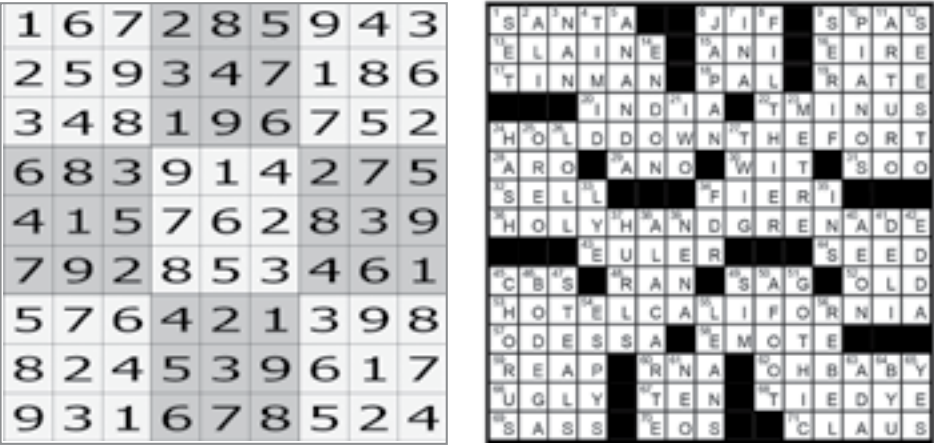


Sudoku ★★★★★ 4puz.com

	9	5				6	2	
7								8
		8	4		2	5		
3	8		2		4		9	5
				5				
5	2		6		9		4	3
		7	9		8	3		
4								2
	5	3				4	7	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS December 26, 2025 edition



Truth or Lies: The Box

Nevia and her husband Nipsi looked forward to the holiday season. The week before Christmas, the family tradition of decorating the Christmas tree was in full swing. They would select a real tree from Fannie's Orchard every year. Nipsi would place it in front of the window in the living room. Their two children Shasha and Stephiney would help decorate the tree with ornaments, sometimes with their colors of choice. This year's colors were baby blue and royal blue with a sizzle of silver and white to tie the colors together making the tree look royal.

Mom and Dad would wrap the gifts; the children would place the bows and name tags. The family would dress in pamajams matching each other and take pictures to upload on the 'net to show family and friends.

On Christmas Eve, Nipsi waited until the children were tucked in bed to place the gifts under the tree for family and friends. Nivia would give the best lavish gifts, even electronics. Nivia made fresh sugar cookies and placed them next to a glass of milk. But of course, Nipsi was Santa! He would always eat the delicious cookies with that fresh milk. Nipsi placed the gifts under the tree and held Nevias in his arms with satisfaction. They waited for the family to arrive for their Christmas Eve celebration, sitting by the fireplace admiring their tree.

The relatives were all chattering about what Nivia could possibly give this year. Nivia and Nipsi would give



the best gifts. Everyone enjoyed visiting and swapping gifts at their house each year. Nivia and Nipsi would wrap 50 gifts or more, making sure everyone got a gift. The dinner party was a success. Everyone swapped gifts and talked, making the night special.

The next day the children were excited, jumping for joy, repeating themselves over and over again, "Christmas is here, Christmas is here!" They ran over to the tree, grabbing the boxes and packages with their name on it. Everyone received their gifts, but there sat one box left. It was wrapped in shimmering red paper with a big red bow on it. Shasha grabbed it, handing it to her dad. He asked, "What is this? A gift for me?"

Shasha replied, "It does not have a name tag on it."

"Oh maybe it's for your mom." They took the red shimmering box to Nivia. Before they could speak, she said, "Oh is this mine?"

Nipsi said, "You did not leave this for me or anyone, did you?"

"No, I don't know where this box

came from. Maybe someone left it for you and forgot with all the excitement. Just put it back under the tree," Nivia said. "We will wait and see if anyone left it for me or you"

Four days later, Nivia had called everyone who attended the party; however, no one knew of or saw the shimmering red box. Nipsi decided they would open the box after dinner. The family was excited to see what it contained. Finally the moment had arrived! Stephiney and Shasha started peeling off the paper. The box was 4x6 and very light. Once they peeled off the wrappings and opened the box, it was empty!

"What, an empty box?!" said Stephiney. "What's that all about?" They looked at each other, then the box. It had red hearts decorating the whole box.

Shasha said, "I know the meaning! Look at it — the emptiness represents how your life could be without love. No gift can replace love."

Happy New Year! Thanks for supporting the my holiday especial edition of the game.

Café Liv

Art on a Journey Gallery Presents

Rachel

Jan 3 - Jan 31

Art on a Journey Gallery is thrilled to present the art of Rachel Perazza. Rachel was born and raised in the Detroit area with a brief time in Puerto Rico. Most of her work is Abstract with some Still Life, but her passion lies mostly in the emotions and thoughts portrayed in the human face. Her hope is that by reflecting these expressions back to the viewer, something can be touched bringing awareness on a much deeper level, therefore initiating change.

Artist's Reception Saturday, January 10, 2026, 2:30 - 4pm

At Café Liv
202 N Washington St, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
www.ArtOnAJourneyGallery/Rachel

New year Happyscopes

SAVON SALVADOR
Groundcover vendor No. 273

This is our song: "HappyScopes is here today. Read it, laugh and smile all day! HappyScopes is here today!"

Capricorn: Dec.22-Jan.19

Your horns are pointed in the right direction. Ambition and discipline will come easy this year.

Aquarius: Jan.20-Feb.18

Yes, you can see the future of success. Bearing love and determination will thrust you into your vision.

Pisces: Feb.19- Mar.20

You will swim into romance whether spiritual or artistic. Musically, have no

fear to launch your emotions to lead you into greatness.

Aries: Mar.21-Apr.19

Let's March on leading the way! Expelling that contagious confident and talented personality.

Taurus: Apr.20-May 20

Jump for joy! Harvest your fruits. Devote yourself to cooking, your work and ideals; be patient.

Gemini: May 21-June 20

Harness yourself! Light up your desires and affections. Represent your expressive movement and connect all aspects of your personality.

Cancer: June 21-July 21

Don't be crabby! Take your career to the next level. Believe in yourself and be loyal and believe in your abilities blending to manifest your power.

Leo: July 23-Aug.22

Stop roaring!! Warm up your heart to passionate leaders. Harness your creative nature to reveal your strengths.

Virgo: Aug.23-Sept.22

Hey happy one! Pay attention to all your work. Others see it as staying confident. Love is at your door - open it and let it in! Grow, Grow, Grow!

Libra: Sept.23-Oct.22

Don't tip the scale!! Balance your peace and love by giving and sharing!

Scorpio: Oct.23-Nov.21

You can be brave now. Your power is in your resourceful nature. Regenerate yourself and transform your mysterious beliefs.

Sagittarius: Nov.22-Dec.21

Don't be clingy! Laugh and let go! Release your generous great love of humor!

untitled 3

AUGUSTINE JAY
Groundcover vendor No. 678

directing devotion

dissecting emotion

spiritually unfolding

astrally exploding

most of us are gnashing

weeping from our lashings

screaming at our judges

while dreaming up new drudges

blisters from the toil

sinisterly soiled

cynical delusion

sin you call confusion

i surrender

Volunteers wanted! Daytime Warming Center 2026

Once again winter is upon us and the Daytime Warming Center is in full swing, serving the unhoused in Washtenaw County. As we all know, this winter made its presence known starting on Thanksgiving Day with frigid temperatures and it has been that way ever since, cold!

At the end of the 2024-25 Daytime Warming Center, I wrote an article in the April 4, 2025 edition reflecting on my first year as a DWC staff member. Now, I want to invite Groundcover News readers to come visit the DWC.

Before I explain why, I want to start by saying thank you to Zion Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor Friends Meeting House, First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, Lord of Light Lutheran Church, St. Mary's Student Parish, First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor, First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor and the Freighthouse in Ypsilanti for hosting the 2025-26 Daytime Warming Center.

A brief history of the DWC

In 2012, Peggy Lynch of Mercy House in Ann Arbor and Sheri Wander of Peace House in Ypsilanti were distraught seeing unhoused people with nowhere to go during significant portions of the day, especially in the winter.

At that time the Delonis Center was a "high barrier" shelter. Folks had to breathealyze and drop a negative drug test to stay. A group of folks had been pushing the Ann Arbor City council to open a day shelter in one of the abandoned buildings but were not having any luck. Peggy and Sheri met with Father Dan Ream (who at the time was a priest at St. Mary's Student Parish) and asked if they could make use of the basement for a few weeks so folks could stay warm during the day. He said yes and the DWC was born.

The first year it was run 100% by volunteers. Peggy noted that the philosophy of the DWC derived from the running of Camp Take Notice, a physical "tent-city" type camp on the outskirts of Ann Arbor, which closed in 2012. At CTN, the residents played the largest role in running and managing the camp. "When we started hearing about 'polar vortexes,' people experiencing homelessness — in community conversations — said we had to establish a place for people to be inside, out of the elements and in community," Peggy said. The initial churches were mostly those who had a previous relationship with CTN, though staunch DWC supporter First Baptist Church was an exception.

At the end of the season Father Dan agreed to encourage other churches to



MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

work with the nonprofit MISSION to host a day shelter but encouraged MISSION to hire a staff person to act as a communication link with the faith communities and help with de-escalation and conflict intervention

The DWC ran in Ann Arbor for many years before there was an Ypsilanti location. Sheri had always advocated for a second space in Ypsi and became even more aware of the need when she moved from Mercy House to start Peace House.

In 2019, CJ (an employee at the Delonis Center at the time) worked with the City of Ypsilanti and organized a day shelter at the Freighthouse run by the Shelter Association. After the first two years it was open in Ypsi, the DWC collective and MISSION took over the day-to-day running of the Freighthouse day shelter.

In the years before the opening of the Daytime Warming Center, times were tough for the unhoused of Washtenaw County. A lot of homeless people lost their lives to the elements.

In the late 2000s, a lot of homeless people committed suicide by jumping off the many Ann Arbor parking structures. After so many deaths, they started putting the chronically homeless in hotels and putting up fencing on all the parking structures, and offering day and overnight warming centers if temperatures (with wind chill) were below 10 degrees fahrenheit.

How the DWC and its volunteers make a difference

A person like me doesn't have to look at the numbers to tell you that homelessness has been increasing, and social and economic segregation has forced those unhoused to utilize the warming center services more, because places like Starbucks no longer allow people into their place of business if they don't purchase anything.

At the Daytime Warming Center all are welcome. People from all walks of life stop by to volunteer, donate or just to say hey, and communicate with the community as a whole. Local



Left: Daytime Warming Center volunteers Phil, Ken and Mike help start the day with friendly smiles. Right: Susan, a Daytime Warming Center volunteer and member of St. Mary's Student Parish, serves lunch.

businesses — such as Maiz Mexican Cantina, Mama Pizza and FedUp Ministries — donate food, and we at the Daytime Warming Center say thank you to all persons and businesses that help us to help our community.

I ran into Lisa who has been volunteering at the DWC for four years. I asked her what made her want to volunteer at the DWC; her response was truly amazing. She said, "I applied for a job to be a staff member and was not hired." That was not going to keep her from doing what she loves doing, helping others. So she became a volunteer. Lisa informed me that she is a psychiatric and drug abuse nurse, so being in an environment like a warming center is a comfortable space for her.

I also met a volunteer named Diane who is a member of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor. The Church asked her to coordinate the food because of her expertise (before she retired she worked in food service). This is the first time First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor has hosted the DWC and I asked her how she likes volunteering so far. She said, "It is really nice and I have met some really nice people." She continued to express that she, and her fellow church volunteers, are honored to serve the unhoused community.

Phil Huhn, who attends St. Mary's Student Parish, has been volunteering at the DWC since January 2019. Huhn has been a dedicated volunteer who has contributed to the success of the DWC. I asked him what made him start doing volunteer work. He said, "I retired and found a need for my service at the DWC and stuck with it." During our conversation he explained



his enjoyment with communicating and helping those in need. The last question I asked him was, "Would you encourage others to volunteer at the DWC?" He said, "Yes, not just at the DWC, but to volunteer where you feel comfortable and needed."

I got a chance to talk to Sheri Wander who helped start the DWC and has been instrumental in helping to keep it running since then. I asked how she was enjoying her first year not being a staff member at the DWC. She said, "It's really hard; I miss it." She expressed her confidence in the DWC staff members and their ability to keep things running smoothly through community engagement, communicating with guests and staff members to mitigate and solve problems, and making friendships while providing a place for people to feel and be safe.

Peat, a long-time DWC staff member and now DWC Fundraising Coordinator, wanted to be sure to let Groundcover readers know that to volunteer you don't have to sign up, you can come by anytime and volunteer and/or bring clothes, food "and your sparkling personality!" To find out more, visit daytimewarmingcenter.org.

The overall message from those who work and volunteer at the DWC is that they enjoy it — and encourage people to do the same. I myself believe serving and doing for others is good for the soul. It's always nice to see people taking care of one another. Shoutout to all the staff members and volunteers at the DWC, and shoutout to Pastor Taylor of St. Luke's Episcopal Church who hosts the Ypsilanti offsite overnight shelter. Thank you for all that you do!

from the ARCHIVES



15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS
FROM THE GROUND UP

Winter tragedies could be avoided with a warming center for homeless

ORIAN ZAKAI
Guest contributor

Winter is here. Deadly low temperatures will torture hundreds of Washtenaw County inhabitants who will not be able to find shelter. The Delonis Center has diminished the capacity of its [overnight, emergency] warming spaces this year, from 75 to 25. Even with additional 75 spaces at the Delonis residential program and the 25 spaces at the rotating church shelter, this is not enough. We know for a fact that dozens of people were sleeping outside, under bridges, on sidewalks, on the footsteps of churches, gas stations and so on, in previous winters. The recent foreclosures, layoffs and pension cuts mean that more people are looking for shelter rather than fewer. In addition, Ann Arbor has been lacking a daytime warming center for awhile now, and thus, numerous people must wander around town during the cold days in search of warmth at the public library, university buildings, local businesses and the like.

"This winter's record low

temperatures will not only be unbearable and cruel to some, but will also be very painful and even fatal to others. In a civil society like our own, most of us would agree that it would be equally as cold and just as cruel if we chose to ignore the dilemma some of our citizens face this Christmas and New Year holiday season," stated David Coleman, one of the founding members of the "Imagine WarmingCenters" group, in the last city council meeting.

Imagine Warming Centers, a task force consisting of students and community members, envisions a 24-hour warming center democratically run by homed and homeless volunteers.

This would be a place of community building, where homeless and homed individuals combine their skills, explore their creativity, support and empower each other. Over 25 volunteers are committed to work at the warming center this winter, and more and more people are constantly asking to get involved.

The biggest concern right now is locating a site that could be ready and available to the public as soon as possible. The group has been looking at

vacant commercial spaces and buildings due for demolition, and has asked for the city's support in locating a space that could be leased or donated to the warming center.

"We approached a few property owners and they have not been cooperative with us," said activist Alexandra Hoffman in her address to the City Council.

"The winter is here, the volunteers are waiting, and we need a space! My friend mentioned 415 Washington Street; there is also the Georgetown Mall and the former Borders. These spaces can be used while the redevelopment projects are being pursued. We could use these spaces right now," Hoffman added.

So far, however, the City of Ann Arbor has been slow in offering assistance or even advice. The group has also sought professional help from the Washtenaw Housing Alliance, but the position of WHA is that resources should be invested in establishing affordable housing rather than a temporary shelter. Members of the Imagine Warming Centers group agree that housing is the ultimate goal, but



contend that the current need for a public warm space should still be met in the short term.

"While we certainly intend to work toward the building of affordable housing in Ann Arbor," said one member of the group, "we also need to let people in out of the cold right now, so that we do not look back in anger and sorrow come April and know that we could have prevented people's deaths, and didn't."

Originally published in the January 2012 edition of Groundcover News.

➡ PUBLIC HEALTH from page 10

disparities and other behaviors revealed in health risk factor surveys. Both the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation Report and the M-Live.com publication of 2023 noted the following:

- Washtenaw is consistently ranked high for positive health factors and outcomes and it is among the top ten Michigan counties.

- Washtenaw County "had the lowest COVID-19 death rate in Michigan, attributed to strong health efforts. Life expectancy is also above the state average, according to one report."

- For areas needing improvement, the report noted, "Despite overall health rankings, the County has health disparities, such as significantly higher low-birth-weight rates for Black babies compared to white babies. It also has

a lower ranking in social determinants of health. Some reports show a higher rate of depression among the Medicare population compared to state and national averages."

- When it comes to influencing factors, "the County's strong rankings are often linked to factors like access to education, living wage jobs, access to health care, as well as challenges like food insecurity and pollution."

Conclusion

Since 1995, the Healthy People Initiatives have contributed significantly to the health policy debate and conversation in America. Many county health departments benefited from the debates and initiatives, and Washtenaw County is a good example of self-assessment in response to the

initiatives. The residents of Washtenaw have benefited from the focus on health, as have many counties across the nation.

Although the Nixon administration started a serious policy discussion about universal health care in the 1970s, the Clinton Administration of the 1990s magnified the intensity of that health policy debate at the national, state and local levels.

What were the main issues of the health policy debate? They were rising costs and lack of healthcare coverage. These are still the policy and political issues of the generation. Deceased Michigan Congressional Representative John Dingell led the Michigan congressional delegation on all the healthcare debates including questions of reform. His wife, Congressional Representative Debbie Dingell, has

continued the fight to lower the costs of healthcare for Washtenaw County and Michigan families (as well as families across the nation).

A regional structure now exists for more partnerships and more cooperation on health matters, transportation connectivity, affordable housing and income/employment opportunities, led by an organization called SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments). It is hereby proposed that the positive regional partnership between WCHD and Livingston County Health Department explore the feasibility of more regional partnerships with other counties such as Wayne, Macomb and Oakland. Identifying factors associated with the concept of social determinants of health could be a beneficial outcome of collaboration.

Chicken chili

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 3 (15 ounce) cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 (4 ounce) cans chopped green chiles

- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Dash of cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup chopped fresh herbs (cilantro, chives or parsley), to taste
- ¾ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Directions:

Heat olive oil in a Dutch oven or large stock pot over medium heat. Cook the chicken, onion, and garlic in hot oil until chicken is browned on both sides, about 5 minutes.

Transfer chicken to a cutting board; cut into 1-inch pieces and return chicken pieces to the Dutch oven. Add chicken broth, cannellini beans, green chiles, oregano, cumin, and cayenne pepper. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook until the chicken is cooked through, 30 to 40 minutes.

Divide your choice of fresh herbs among four bowls. Ladle chili over herb and top with cheese. Season with salt to serve.





St. Francis of Assisi Parish

"If God were your Father, you would love me,
for I came from God and am here;
I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)

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Mass Schedule

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Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am,
12:30 pm, 5 pm

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